

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Regulations	2-10
Summary.....	2
Special Areas.....	3
Sport Fish Restoration Program	9
Other Methods of Fishing	10
Trout Stocking	12-13
Fishing.....	14-20
Float Trips and Water Trails	14
Public Lakes and Ponds	16
Favorite Waters.....	18
Boating and Water Safety	19
Fish	21-27
State Record Fish.....	21
Trophy Fish Citation Program.....	22
Angler's Alert.....	22
A Guide to Your Health	24
WV Consumption Advisories.....	25
Ohio River Consumption Advisories	27
License Fees and Information.....	28-29
Sport Fish Identification.....	30

This pamphlet is a summary of the applicable laws and regulations governing sport fishing in West Virginia. The West Virginia Code and the West Virginia Code of Rules contain the details of these laws and regulations. Both publications are available for review in the Director's Office and Division of Natural Resources District Offices. Copies of the official regulations may be obtained from the West Virginia Secretary of State. Year-round fishing is in effect unless otherwise noted.

New for 2019

1. During the 2018 legislative session, a law was passed making it legal to hand-fish or "noodle" in public waters of West Virginia beginning in 2018. The season for hand-fishing runs from June 15 through Aug. 31 with fishing permitted from sunrise until sunset. See page 5 for more details.
2. Catch and release regulations were established on four brook trout streams and all tributaries of each. Fly-fishing only regulation was established on a section of Edward's Run. See page 6-7 for more details.
3. A slot limit regulation was established on Parker Hollow Lake for all black bass. On Stonewall Jackson Lake, an exclusion for registered bass tournament participants will allow more than one bass over 18 inches to be taken to weigh-in. See page 3 for more details.



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Landowner – Sportsmen Relations

West Virginia anglers are indebted to local landowners throughout the state. Without their consent and generosity, fishing would be restricted to state and federal lands. The opportunity for continued use of private property is largely dependent upon anglers' attitudes and conduct. Most stream closures are the result of disrespect for private property.

Statement of Policy Relative to Public Use of Facilities

It is the policy of the Division of Natural Resources to provide its facilities, accommodations, services and programs to all persons. Complaints should be mailed to: Director, Division of Natural Resources, 324 Fourth Avenue, Room 341, South Charleston, WV 25303, or to the Office of Human Resources, U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, MA 01035-9589. The Division of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity employer.